



SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING

DECEMBER 2007

Websites: www.unadillapresbyterian.org / www.eastquilfordpc.org

Who are you, little boy?

Who are you, little boy,
Who fills my womb with promise,
That an angel announced your coming?
Who are you whom the Spirit conceived in
me?

Who are you, little boy,
Who grows within my betrothed
That in a dream God should call me?
Who are you for whom I am taking Mary as
wife?

Who are you, little boy,
That angels chant your praise to mere
shepherds?
Who are you for whom I rush down hills to
town?
Who are you whom I seek in a manger?

Who are you, little boy?
Are you the promised one
For whom we've hoped and prayed and
longed?
Have you come at last?

Who are you, little boy
Who fills my stable with groans of birth,
Then cries of joy and fresh-filled lungs?
Who are you that shepherds should kneel
in my barn?

Who are you, little boy
That a star illuminates your birth?
Who are you to beckon old men with
eastern lore
To travel far and fall at your feet?

Who are you, little boy,
Whom wise men seek in court as king?
Who are you to usurp my claim to rule my
world?
Who are you, fearsome, fragile Messiah-boy?

Who are you, little boy,
Whose glory I have seen,
Who uncurls woodshavings near my bench?
Who sweeps and sands, and loves a stand-in
father?

Who are you, little boy,
Who challenges scribes beyond our knowing?
Who weighs our answers, probes our doubts?
Who are you to call these golden halls, "My
Father's House"?

Who are you, little boy,
Who heals and teaches and loves?
Who breaks time-honored rules without
shame?
Who generates such wonder within?

Who are you, little boy,
Who wounds your mother's heart?
For whom do you suffer, if innocent?
What do you mean, "It is finished!" when you
die?

Who are you, little boy,
Who comes into my world?
Do I know? Perhaps, but let me ask again:
Who you are, little boy?

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Two years ago I wrote to encourage you in your faith as we were adjusting to life without a full-time pastor. You may remember that I suggested a positive approach for dealing with change in the Church. I feel the need to encourage you again and I begin with an excerpt from that news-letter article:

We know that change is inevitable and unpredictable. We have reason to fear the unknown but all we have are the present and the future. Let us work together as we move into uncharted water. Pray for one another, be present in worship and other activities, participate in the life of the church and persevere. Our “time in the desert”, although painful, presents tremendous growth possibilities for us—both individually and as a parish—if we will only step forward in faith.

When I wrote last time I had no idea that I would be called to serve on the pastoral nominating committee to seek our next pastor, but I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in this capacity, helping to do God’s work. I am very pleased to report to you that the rest of the committee shares this feeling of gratitude and joy; working tirelessly and meeting frequently. We agreed at the outset to make decisions by consensus, to pray collectively and individually, and to trust the Holy Spirit to lead us to the pastor God has in mind for us. We refuse to feel desperate or pressured to be hasty in our work. God knows when our work will be done. We don’t, and that is ok because he has a plan for us.

At our first PNC meeting Art Suggs, our COM representative, prayed with us and offered an opportunity for us to contribute to that prayer. I was pleasantly surprised when Becky Holley offered a few words, including a verse from Jeremiah 29 that I always carry in my wallet, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” We frequently refer to this verse as we go about our PNC work and I encourage each of you to read this uplifting chapter as well.

I began thinking about writing to you last Saturday morning while doing my morning devotions that include a meditation from the *Upper Room*. The devotion for that day was a reflection on Jeremiah 29. I spent the day thinking about what I might write but it wasn’t until Sunday when Pastor Dale preached from Haggai that it all came together for me.

When life deals you lemons, make lemonade!

Shortly after the Babylonians captured Jerusalem, carrying off most of the populace, God spoke to the captives through Jeremiah: “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”

Can you put yourself in the sandals of these exiles? Consider the circumstances:

1. The temple (the Jews' great symbol of their special relationship with God) has been reduced to rubble.

2. Freedom is lost.

3. The period of exile is expected to be seventy years.

Chances are slim to none that anyone born before the exile will live to return.

That does sound bleak. I freely admit that I would be ready for sackcloth and ashes. But that was not God's plan. He not only promised an end to the exile in seventy years, but commanded that everyday life return to normal. Notice also that He asks the captives to be happy in their circumstance, praying for peace and prosperity for their captors as well. Can we learn something from this?

Just how are we doing in our exile? At the risk of leaving something out, I will try to identify some of the ways that we are following God's advice found in Jeremiah:

1. Dale is here to shepherd us through this part of our "exile". He is helping us to become receptive to changes that will inevitably come with a new pastor. He also prepares for and leads worship services and Bible studies. He has also married sons and daughters for us!

2. The sessions are faithfully doing their part to lead the congregations, preparing and administering budgets, promote fellowship activities, mission projects and all other normal functions.

3. The choirs and organists continue to provide a meaningful and effective ministry of music.

4. The youth and their leaders meet regularly and participate in outreach and mission activities.

5. The Unadilla building committee has made great strides in their renovation project that will result in a very much improved facility.

6. The EG UPW is spearheading the November *Share the Bounty Dinner* at the Sidney Methodist Church.

7.

Your PNC is meeting regularly, working deliberately and prayerfully.

Dale's sermon on November 11, based on Haggai 2, reinforces the theme of this message for you. Haggai delivered this prophecy from God at the end of the exile. Verses 4 and 5 offer simple advice and great comfort:

"...But now be strong, O Zerubbabel," declares the Lord. "Be strong, O Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land," declares the Lord, "and work. For I am with you," declares the Lord Almighty.... "And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear." The Lord does have good things in mind for us, not only in the future, but right now. Let's go boldly forward doing God's work, remembering that "...I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." So get ready to build, plant gardens, start knitting blankets for all those new babies, **pray** for your enemies, **work** and enjoy that lemonade.

God be with you,

Dave Williams

East Guilford Session News

- We reviewed the various Bible Study groups. Because of low participation, we decided to drop the Shalom Study Program at this time.
- We approved taking the Christmas Joy Offering during the Christmas Season.
- We approved hosting the Mountain of Food and Mitten Tree projects for Sidney's Operation Merry Christmas Program.
- We approved the construction of several College Student Gift Boxes to be sent to the current college students as they enter the stressful weeks of finals (before the end of the Fall semester).
- We planned the Nov. 24th Joint Adult Fellowship evening. This will be an evening of table games and fellowship. We worry about low attendance at this very busy time of the year.
 - We planned the Christmas Worship and Fellowship Season for our church;
 - Dec. 2, setup and decorate the sanctuary tree, fill the college student gift boxes
 -
 - Dec. 16, Joint Adult Fellowship Family Christmas Dinner
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- We approved the Christmas Poinsettia Program. This year we will be encouraging all donors to take their Poinsettia home after the Dec. 23 worship, or better yet, to take their Poinsettia and to share it by delivering it to a shut-in or person to whom they care about. Forms will be available during worship.
- We received a report from the Personnel Committee and their work in reviewing the Secretary and Pastor's work.

We started the kick-off of getting the Nominating Committee to work on finding two suitable candidates to serve as Ruling Elders, starting in 2008.

COMMUNITY HOLIDAY EVENTS

Festival of the Trees - Dec. 8 & 9, Dec 15 & 16 - Unadilla Masonic Temple. Come see a variety of Christmas trees decorated by local organizations and businesses. There will be music, bake sales, and a Chinese auction and, of course, Santa Clause. Open from 4:00 to 6:00 pm.

The Lost Sheperd: A Musical Drama presented by the St. Luke's Lutheran Church Choir. December 7 & 8, 7:30 pm. Tickets available at Country Computers & Publishing. Reception to follow.

Arrival of Saint Nick: Unadilla: December 8, 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm, Masonic Temple on Main Street. Bring a can of food for the food bank and receive a free picture with St. Nick. Treat bags & snacks.


EAST GUILFORD NEWS

- East Guilford Women had a Pie/Bake Sale on October 20th. It ended up being in front of Eckards/Rite Aid in the Sidney Plaza. We had a great variety of baked goods, including many pies, breads, cookies, and other goodies. We sold almost everything out in less than 3 hours and was very happy with the outcome. Thanks to all the good bakers in our congregation!!
- On November 15th we hosted the Share the Bounty supper at the Sidney Methodist church, with help from the Unadilla Presbyterian church. The dinner consisted of Scalloped potatoes, green beans, tossed salad, rolls and apple crisp. We served about 150 people and it was very well received by everyone who attended.
- On November 24th, we will be having a Family Fellowship dish-to-pass dinner for the monthly Fellowship. After our dinner we will have games and fellowship. We hope to have a post-Thanksgiving dinner with many casseroles made from left over turkey and other delicious Thanksgiving foods!
- Very soon the order blank will be in the Sunday bulletins for ordering Poinsettias. If you would like one in Memory of or in Honor of, please fill it out and put it in the offering plate or give it to Marie Spreutels or Lola Palmer.
- We will be sending a box of 'goodies' to our college students once again this year. We have 13 students who qualify for this mission. On Dec. 2nd, after worship, we will have a coffee hour and pack the boxes to send out.
- On December 16th, we will have a Family Fellowship Christmas dinner. This is always well attended and hopefully many will come and enjoy the fellowship. It will be at 12:00 and we hope to be able to eat by 12:30.
- We will once again be involved in Operation Merry Christmas by having a Mitten Tree and a Mountain of Food. That will begin with Advent and run through Dec. 16th.
- On January 8th, the East Guilford Women will be furnishing and serving a light supper for the Committee on Ministry at the Presbytery office in Bainbridge.
- We have for a long time helped to furnish the Food Pantry at the Methodist Church in Sidney. Their shelves are not very full and they would appreciate seeing the shelves fill up faster. We are now going into the winter months and there is always more of a need for extra food for those who are in need. Foods they would like to see are: soups, canned vegetables, canned fruits, (don't forget the diabetic fruits too), macaroni and cheese boxed dinners, tuna fish, tuna helpers, spaghetti sauce, pasta (spaghetti and macaroni and noodles and any- thing else that you might think of. And please check the 'do not use after' date. Anything they receive that is outdated they have to throw out.

UNADILLA SESSION NOTES

The Unadilla session met for its regular meetings in October and December and decided and learned the following:

- Voted to donate the same holiday donation as last year to Camp Brace
- earned that Chris Bomba received his Eagle award;
- approved the use of the church for the wedding of Joshua Sanchez and Amber Tompkins on December 1, 2007, with pastor Dale officiating;
- approved the transfer of memberships of Bonnie and Scott Scherhofer and Sandy DuMond to the Bainbridge Presbyterian Church;
- listened to at great length and responded to concerns of members brought to the session regarding the pastor;
- learned that there was a hayride on October 14 sponsored by the Church Life committee;
- approved having "bare bones" coffee hours in the basement to show members the great progress of reconstruction in the basement fellowship hall- the first of which will be November 25;
- approved the request of Vickie and Brian Dawson to have their daughter, Cora Sandrine Dawson baptized on November 25, 2007;
- at the recommendation of the personnel committee, voted to extend the interim pastor's contract through March, 2008 at the same terms of the 2007 contract;
- tabled membership requests and directed the members of session to visit those members of the church regarding membership concerns and reconcile with them;
- discussed concern regarding low attendance during worship;
- received financial report and discussed the grave concern of low finances;
- received the rebuilding loan from General Assembly loan and discussed ways to increase the pledge commitment;
- Church Life will have a pizza party on December 5 to pack cookies for college students



People News

- Many thanks go to our "Courtneys" (Davidson and Kleeschulte) for sharing their skits from VBS during worship. Many thanks also go to Shelly Havens and Lori Bomba for leading the children each week in Sunday School.

- What a nice surprise in the mail yesterday from Ann Bolanda. She greatly appreciates receiving our church newsletter so she can keep up with the current happenings. She walks with a walker now and doesn't get out much. She is finally getting to like Virginia and the beauty of the mountains. There is not as much snowfall there. She looks forward to the cards from Harmony Circle. She would like Mildred Robertson's current address to write to her as they have been friends since 1940 in Delhi.

Her current address is:

PO Box 13846 Roanoke VA
24037

THE U IN JESUS

Before U were thought of or time had begun,
God stuck U in the name of His Son.

And each time U pray, you'll see it's true,
You can't spell out JesUs and not include U.

You're a pretty big part of His wonderful name,
For U, He was born; that's why He came.

And His great love for U is the reason He died.
It even takes U to spell crUcified.

Isn't it thrilling and splendidly grand
He rose from the dead, with U in His plan?

The stones split away, the gold trUmpet blew,
and this word resUrrection is spelled with a U.

When JesUs left earth at His upward ascension,
He felt there was one thing He just had to
mention.

"Go into the world and tell them it's true
That I love them all - Just like I love U."

So many great people are spelled with a U,
Don't they have a right to know JesUs too?

It all depends now on what U will do,
He'd like them to know,
But it all starts with U.

Church Life Committee Report

The rebuilding of the basement in the First Presbyterian Church has begun. In order that the congregation can keep abreast of the work we are going to start having short coffee hours in the basement every other week starting on Dec. 9th. Please consider joining us for a time of fellowship and celebration.

On December 1st we will be decorating the sanctuary for Christmas. All help would be welcomed.

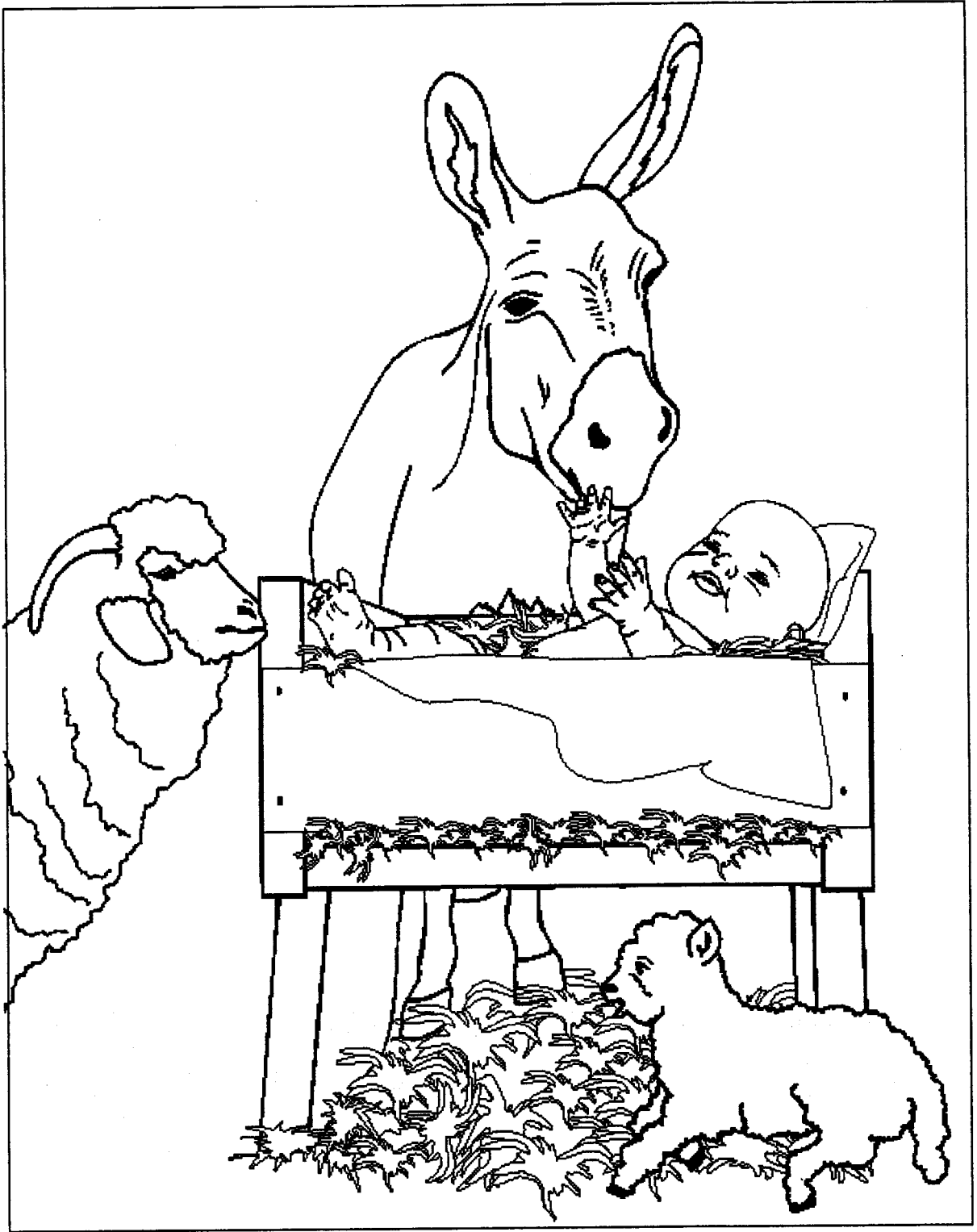


On December 5th we will be having our annual cookie packing to ship to the college students and some of our shut-in's. Join us for pizza before the packing starts or just come and help to pack the cookies. We will be starting at 6:00 p.m.

We are planning a Christmas Caroling hay ride on Dec. 16th. We will meet at the church at 2:00 and return to the church for chili, chowder and other goodies after the hayride. If it should "rain" we will go directly to the refreshments with caroling among ourselves in the basement.

We are also going to participate in the School's project - Holiday Helping Hands. Watch the bulletin for further information on this if you want to buy gifts for a needy child.

Finally, on Jan. 06th, we will be having an "Epiphany Party". We will undecorate the church and have refreshments. This will start at 1:00 p.m. and all are welcome.



UNADILLA CHRISTIAN ED NEWS

Youth Group: Members of the group dressed up in Halloween costumes the night of November 4th and visited homes of church family and friends. The activity was called "Reverse Trick or Treating", and the youth handed out Halloween treats in exchange for donations of food for the Unadilla Food Pantry. About 5-6 bags of groceries were collected.

Also - The youth group will be participating in the Relay for Life for the 4th year in a row, and are collecting returnable bottles through the fall and winter.



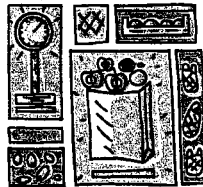
Please consider donating your bottles to this worthy cause. They may be brought to the Community Redemption Center on Cartwright Avenue in Sidney. Tell them you are donating your

refund to the East Guilford and Unadilla Presbyterian Youth Group Relay for Life Team. OR contact any youth group member or leader, and we will pick up your bottles and bring them for you! You would be amazed at how quickly the nickels add up!

UNADILLA WORSHIP:

We will not be ordering poinsettias as in the past. If anyone would like to bring a poinsettia plant or other kinds of plants or flowers to decorate our sanctuary for the holidays, please bring them for the service on Dec 16th or 23rd. Please fill out an information blank if you would like to honor or remember a loved one. This should be done BEFORE Dec 16th so that the secretary will have time to get the list in the bulletin insert. Please give them to Sharon or put them in her church mailbox in the narthex. All plants should be removed after the service on Dec 30th. We hope that you will enjoy helping with this annual project to beautify our holiday worship services. The Christmas Eve service will be held in Unadilla this year.

The Christian Ed committee has started a new curriculum with the Sunday School. Plans have been made for the Christmas children's program on December 16 during worship. The children will also be participating in some way during worship during Advent. The committee is assisting the Church Life committee find families to support through the Helping Hands Christmas project at the High School. More information and sign-up sheets will be forthcoming in the bulletin and during worship as soon as we have it. Several adults have enjoyed the M*A*S*H Bible studies led by the pastor on Wednesday noon and Thursday evenings.



Food Pantry- Many thanks to Stephanie Frazier and our church youth group who did a reverse trick or treat in the village to collect food items for the pantry. For

December donations, please consider giving Christmas dinner foods or packaged cookies or candies or fresh fruit. We are well stocked with canned vegetables at this time. Donations may be left in the basket at church anytime. We will be packing the Christmas dinner boxes on the morning of Friday Dec 21st. We did twenty boxes for the Thanksgiving applicants. Anyone in need may stop by the pantry for an application Mon. and Fri mornings 11am to noon or call Joann at 369-7315.

The First Presbyterian Church of Unadilla
P.O. Box Z
Unadilla, NY 13849

Non Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Unadilla, NY 13849



Christmas Eve Service
Unadilla Presbyterian Church
7:00 pm

Spiritually Speaking

The First Presbyterian Church of Unadilla
P.O. Box Z, Unadilla, NY 13849

The United Presbyterian Church of East Guilford
P.O. Box 147, Sidney, NY 13838

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www.eastguilfordpc.org and
www.unadillapresbyterian.org

For Pastoral Concerns call:

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Newsletter

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All contributions are welcome!